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ABSTRACT

The student who has an understanding of computers and other modern technologies is becoming important in college and in the workplace. Two California State Universities now require a personal computer for incoming freshmen. Vice President Albert Gore has urged all Americans to get on the information superhighway. Parents can assist their child and their child's school to get on the superhighway by, first, recognizing the value of learning new technologies. Technology is rapidly changing most professions. Second, parents can encourage their child's school to use modern technology in the classroom. Third, parents can advocate computer literacy as a major focus of the child's curriculum. Parents who themselves have difficulty with new technology should keep the following in mind when thinking about computer use for their children. First, fear of technology can be cured; psychologists have developed several approaches to curing fear and anxiety associated with computer use. Second, computers should not be pushed on preschoolers because they require a perceptually rich environment. Third, computers can distance children from real life. According to Craig Brod, "computers can promote in children a distorted sense of time, mental fatigue, social isolation, and an unhealthy attachment to machines." (TB)

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TOPIC: The Super Information Highway: Developing Your CHILD'S COMMUNICATION SKILLS WITH New TECHNOLOGIES

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DATE: FEBRUARY 1, 1995

Is your child being trained for the information superhighway? The student who has an understanding of computers and other modern technologies is becoming more important in college and in the workplace. Two California State Universities are requiring a personal computer for incoming freshman. Vice President Albert Gore has urged all Americans to get on the information superhighway.

You can assist your child and your child's school get on the information superhighway by:

First, recognizing the value of learning new technologies. Technology is rapidly changing most professions. In order for businesses to survive they must adopt more complex technologies and services techniques. These businesses will need people who can read well and know how to use a computer. Dee Ward Hock, the founder of the VISA credit card says that with modern technology "ordinary people can do extraordinary things to realize their dreams."

Technology can improve the quality of learning in the

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classroom. For example, computers can be used to lead students through individualized reading curriculum, to evaluate, record, and report to the teacher both reading speed and comprehension.

Second, encourage your school to include the use of modern technology in the classroom. Pat Rowe, a journalism teacher at Big Bear High School has developed an Electronic Imaging Center (EIC) for their photo-graphics and journalism courses. The students use advanced electronic imaging technology including color scanners,1200 DPI printers, and desktop publishing. Students have access to Macintosh computers, Xap shot cameras, video cameras, laser disk players and VCR's. Frank Chavez, an administrator at Herff Jones Publishing observed, "I look at a lot of schools in the yearbook industry, and Big Bear High School is regarded as being on the leading edge of technology."

Third, advocate computer literacy as a major focus of your child's curriculum. Thomas Armstrong, author of AWAKENING YOUR CHILD'S NATURAL GENIUS concluded, "The computer has the potential to serve as a tremendous tool of empowerment for many elementary school-aged children. Children who learn best independently have the opportunity to teach themselves a wide range of school subjects through self-paced and self-correcting software programs. Simulation software give children the opportunity to practice fast-paced decision making in preparation for the demands of real life."

RESEARCH SUMMARY

Is your child's school getting on the super information highway?

You can help your child by:

1. Encouraging the use of modern technology in your child's classroom.
2. Advocate computer literacy as a major component of the school curriculum.
3. Support initiatives to bring more funding for technology to the schools.

TOPIC: EDUCATIONAL CAUTION SIGNS ON THE INFORMATION SUPER HIGHWAY

BY: REED MARKHAM, PH.D

DATE: FEBRUARY 14, 1994

A recent survey by Dell Computer revealed that 32 percent of adults are intimidated by computers and are afraid they will damage the machine while using it. The survey also found that 55 percent of adults are afraid of using VCR's ,answering machines, and Walkmans. According to Ron Donoho, author of TERMINAL ILLNESS, "Those afflicted with technophobia will have to learn to navigate new roads, or prepare to be paved over."Technophobia is one of many problems that students, parents and educators face as they enter the super information highway.

As you and your child encounter new technology, keep in mind the following:

First, technophobia can be cured. Donoho defines a technophobe as "someone paralyzed by computers and complex devices. Full-fledged 'phobes long for the good old days when electric typewriters were cutting edge; think a disk is something that slips in you back, not into a central processing unit; and consider E-mail and F-Troop to be of the same genre."

Psychologists have developed several approaches to curing technophobe. Dr. Joyce Brothers, a well-known psychologist suggests the "implosion" method: "Sit down at the keyboard with a computer expert with whom you feel comfortable. With their help, let them expose you to what you fear. The worst thing you can do is avoid the problem." Ann Liu, Head of the Computer Science Department at San Bernardino Valley College says, "hands on experience will help you to deal with the fear of using computers. Remember that using the computer is safer than driving."

Second, don't push computers at preschoolers. According to Thomas Armstrong, author of AWAKENING YOUR CHILD'S NATURAL GENIUS, "During the years of early childhood, when the child's developmental needs require perceptually rich experiences such as water play, painting on large easels, and plenty of time outdoors, the computer appears to provide a relatively sensory poor environment."

Third, computers can distance children from real life. Craig Brod, author of TECHNOSTRESS: THE HUMAN COST OF THE COMPUTER REVOLUTION said, "computers can promote in children a distorted sense of time, mental fatigue, social isolation, and an unhealthy attachment to machines at the expense of human contact. Some kids become much more fluent with computers than

with people."

Fourth, don't let computers become a crutch. Do computers help by correcting errors? Roger Baker, author of LEARNING MATTERS concluded, My computer does me a disservice by not letting me see the errors of my ways. It teaches me that the world will ignore my mistakes and accept as good something that really isn't."

RESEARCH SUMMARY

Are you a technophobe on the super information highway?

"There is something buried in our archival memories that tells us machines are alien creatures."

-Alan Caruba, Founder, National Anxiety Center

"Technology is an undefined, inhuman, mechanical blind monster. A death force. But flight from and hatred of technology is self-defeating."

-Robert Pirsig, author

"Human beings are meant to contact other human beings. And we're terrified machines will one day replace us."

-Dr. Joyce Brothers, psychologist